

**Town of Essex
Conservation Commission**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – March 8, 2012

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on March 8, 2012 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall. Members in attendance were Kay Tucker, Chair, Doug Demarest, MaryAnn Pleva and Ron Skinner who was seated for Jeff Lovelace. Rich Helmecki, Pam Bernardini, Susan Malan and Jeffrey Lovelace were absent. Also in attendance, Stella Beaudoin, Recording Secretary.

Ms. Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1) Review and approve February 2012 Meeting Minutes.

- Page 3 under Tulip Tree Proposal: “A proposal will be obtained from Bartlett Tree to see if a treatment is advisable.” Ms. Tucker *offered to obtain* a proposal from Bartlett Tree service, however the decision to do so was not made at that meeting.
- Page 2 under Viney Hill Brook Park, add: “Robert Doane Town Engineer recommended elevating the road about one foot.”

Motion made by Maryann Pleva to approve the February 2012 Minutes as amended.

Motion seconded by Ron Skinner and passed unanimously 4/0/0.

2) Old Business

a) Tulip Poplar tree - Canfield Meadow Woods

Ms. Tucker presented photograph which shows the portion of the felled Tulip Poplar tree. Ms. Tucker stated that there are a few options on how to proceed with the felled limb. One option would be to leave the tree limb in place as a playscape. Another option would be to distribute some or all of the wood to the CT Woodturners or another woodturner group. The wood from the Tulip Poplar tree is too soft to turn it into furniture.

Mr. Demarest suggested that the wood be made available to anyone who would like it providing the trails are not damaged. A brief discussion ensued on the pros and cons of

allowing people to come into the trail to remove the wood and the manner in which the wood will be removed as well as the liabilities to the surrounding land and to the Town.

Motion made Doug Demarest that the wood from the fallen Tulip Poplar Tree in Canfield Meadow Woods Nature Preserve is available to anyone who obtains permission from the Conservation Commission to remove the tree, providing there is no risk of damage to the trails or surrounding land and there will be no liability to the Town of Essex for injury incurred during the process of removing the wood.

Motion seconded by Maryann Pleva. Maryann Pleva, Ron Skinner and Doug Demarest in favor. Kay Tucker in opposition. Motion carried 3/1/0.

Discussion:

Members agreed that persons wishing to remove the wood will seek permission from the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Tucker noted that she would prefer that a portion of the tree remain intact.

b) Viney Hill Brook Park – Development of option trail and preserve maintenance.

Maryann Pleva stated that she visited the extensively flooded area in Viney Hill Brook Park. Ms. Pleva stated that the flooding is in the area of Broadwalk where the passive quarry pond trail feeds into Broadwalk. There is a good deal of standing water which has drained down and might in fact be part of the Mud River system. Continuing on Broadwalk past Quarry Pond there is an additional 300 feet of very wet surface. There was a previous discussion to create an optional trail one eighth of a mile upland. There is a proposal to cut a trail from part of Broadwalk that would intersect or bypass Observation Rock and it would continue to the Turtle Trail and then come back on Broadwalk. This would create an additional loop trail. Ms. Pleva stated that she is in favor of adding an optional trail. Doug Demarest suggested the color white to mark this trail. Members agreed to table this discussion to the April 12, 2012 meeting.

Ms. Tucker noted that the mailbox at the end of Broadwalk and leading to Wollock's Pond needs to be replaced.

Mr. Demarest Doug commented on the water level in Old Quarry pond and the baffle pipe. Mr. Demarest inspected the outlet pipe at Old Quarry and he noted that it is working very well and the pond is not overflowing. The water for the outlet is going where it should be going which is through the pipe. The trail is in good shape and there are no signs of beavers in that area.

Ms. Tucker stated there was a second cutting of the phragmite near the residential homes on the side of Quarry Pond.

c) Inland Wetland's Commission Liaison

Ms. Pleva indicated that she may be interested in serving as liaison to the IWWC, however she is not sure if she has the available time in her schedule to serve on both commissions. Mr. Lovelace has also indicated in a letter that he would consider serving as the liaison to the IWWC. Further discussion regarding the liaison to the IWWC was tabled to the April 12, 2012 meeting.

d) Expenditures

Ms. Tucker asked members if they were in agreement to approve the contract from All-Habitat Services. Ms. Tucker stated that a backpack sprayer containing an herbicide will be utilized to remove the phragmite and the Japanese Knotwood. The proposed start date is July 16, 2012 and a temporary trail closing of one hour will occur during the two-stage process. Ms. Tucker had a discussion with Mr. Roach of All-Habitat Services and it was indicated that the start time is crucial in the efficacy of the herbicide program.

Motion made by Ron Skinner to approve the All Habitat Services contract in the amount of \$3050 with a \$350 retainer for the removal of the Phragmite and Japanese Knotweed.

Motion seconded by Doug Demarest and passed unanimously 4/0/0.

Ms. Tucker asked for a motion to engage Shirley Malcarne to update 2011/2012 inventory of conservation easements.

Motion made by Maryann Pleva to hire Shirley Malcarne to update the 2011/2012 inventory of conservation easements within the Town of Essex.

Motion seconded by Doug Demarest and passed unanimously 4/0/0.

e) Maps

Mr. Demarest stated that he has worked on locating the easements within the Town of Essex open space draft map which was distributed at the last meeting. Mr. Demarest stated that he located a few easements to include one on Brookes Lane, one on Old Dobbin Lane and one on Westbrook Road and there are 50-70 additional easements. Mr. Demarest had a group of individual maps which denoted the easements within the town. Mr. Demarest suggested the utilization of these individual maps as a guide to denote the easements. Mr. Demarest will speak with Mr. Budrow about obtaining one map that shows all of the easements. Further discussion is tabled to the April 2012 meeting.

Ms. Tucker commented that the Bushy Hill Preserve map and the Viney Hill Brook Preserve map. Ms. Tucker stated that members must decide on a photo and wording for the maps.

f) Other

Ms. Tucker wrote a letter to First Selectman, Norm Needleman making a recommendation for Susan Malan to become a full member of the Conservation Commission. Ms. Malan will be appointed at the next Board of Selectmen meeting. The recommendation will then go before the Town meeting. If approved, Ms. Malan must be sworn in by the town clerk.

It was noted that Susan Malan was to contact Rick Audet, Director of the Essex Park and Recreation Department to inquire where the route will be situated for a proposed mountain biking activity. Ms. Malan will report to the Commission at the April 12, 2012 meeting.

Maryann Pleva commented on changing the meeting time to 7:00 p.m. Ms. Pleva asked to have this placed on the Agenda for the April 2012 meeting. Ms. Pleva noted that the

Conservation Commission conducts their monthly meetings on the same day and time as the Essex Planning Commission. Ms. Pleva noted that there are members of the Conservation Commission that might wish to attend the Planning Commission meetings. There was a brief discussion.

3) New Business

Ms. Tucker stated that she forwarded to members an email from a gentleman by the name of Carlos Marx regarding the Essex Glen Corporation. A zone change is being sought to drop the age requirement for the over 55 community. A public hearing will be conducted by the Essex Zoning Commission on March 19, 2012 at 7:30 in the Essex Town Hall. In his email, Carlos Marx stated that cluster housing will have a dramatically negative affect on the surrounding land and on the taxes. Ms. Tucker noted that the Essex Glen property abuts Viney Hill Brook Park. The right-of-way road is contested because Herb Clark, who owns Essex Glen, owns the rest of the right-of-way road and it the potential is there to develop that right-of-way into a road with streetlights and cars passing on either side. The Conservation Commission has discussed this matter over the years because the right-of-way is right in the middle of Viney Hill Brook Preserve.

There are 103 condominium units at Heritage Cove and of that number there are only two with children. It was noted that Essex Glen will be comprised of costly, luxury condos. It was agreed that this matter is not within the purview of the conservation commission. A certain amount of land has been retained so that there will be an easement coming down from Viney Hill Brook Park. The conservation commission was deeded thirteen acres of land as a part of the Essex Glen proposal approval

Ms. Tucker asked members if they wish to engage an intern to visit the conservation easements to be certain that the easements are being utilized properly and to determine if people/adjoining property owners are encroaching on the easements. This discussion will be tabled until the maps are straightened out.

Ms. Tucker asked for a member to volunteer to act as the treasurer for the Commission. Ms. Tucker noted that the statements from the town can be confusing and it would be beneficial to have a member to interpret the monthly printouts. Further discussion is tabled to the April 2012 meeting.

4) Correspondence – No correspondence.

5) Adjournment

Motion made by Maryann Pleva to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Ron Skinner and passed unanimously 4/0/0.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Conservation Commission adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary

Next meeting regularly meeting of the Conservation Commission will be conducted on April 12, 2012.